

WASHINGTON, DC—Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) announced today that the House approved \$500,000 to help construct a wastewater system for the City of Coburg.

The funding was included in H.R. 2643, the Interior-Environment Appropriations funding bill for fiscal year 2008.

The bill also includes \$1.9 billion for wildland firefighting and \$252 million.

At the request of DeFazio the bill includes a \$500,000 State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) to help construct a wastewater system in the City of Coburg to protect and improve the region's groundwater. With more than 1,000 residents, Coburg is one of the few cities of its size in Oregon that still lacks a city wastewater system.

The city currently operates on a septic system that is near capacity.

In recent years, Coburg has successfully attracted several recreational vehicle manufacturers, but lack of a wastewater reclamation facility has hindered the community's ability to expand its economic development activities.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$16 million. The city will borrow part of the funding and will receive additional funding from the State of Oregon and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Monthly fees for the average residence could exceed \$100 a month. This grant funding will help offset those monthly fees.

"I am pleased I was able to help secure this funding for Coburg's wastewater system," DeFazio said. "Water infrastructure and water quality are important to fortifying the long-term economic viability of our communities. This funding will help Coburg to build the necessary infrastructure that helps attract new businesses, create jobs and improve the economy."

The bill also included \$1.9 billion for wildfire management, which is an increase of \$106 million over what the President requested. “After years of short changing public lands needs under the Bush Administration, the Democratic House voted to restore critical funding for rural communities,” DeFazio explained. “I am pleased that we are finally providing real funding for important issues such as hazardous fuels reduction, wildland fire management, and our national parks.”

DeFazio also supported an amendment that increased funding for the payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) program by \$20 million, for a total of \$252 million. “Increased PILT payments will help the counties in southwest Oregon provide such services as search and rescue, law enforcement, health services, and libraries.”